



Aruban Artist “Gyzah” provides a mystical experience at the Biblioteca Nacional

Until June 23, art lovers have the rare opportunity to view the most recent collection of Aruban artist Gwendolyn Sneek titled “Mystique,” which is on display at the National Library in Oranjestad. Gwendolyn paints and writes under the name of “Gyzah,” a name she chose to reflect her mystical upbringing and state of mind. Mysticism and sense of fantasy is very much reflected in the works that line the walls of the library’s gallery, and are most definitely worth a look.

This collection by Gyzah are all executed in acrylics on canvas, a new medium for the artist and which, in a short time, she has shown quite an affinity. Nigel Matthew, noted Aruban artist and teacher spoke a few words at the opening on Tuesday evening, June 6, and explained that though he gave Gyzah a few pointers, she showed a technical skill for working with acrylics way beyond anything he taught her. He expressed that he felt her works showed a “quiet determination to master the medium.”

The art of Gyzah is quite eclectic, with paintings that range from a rainbow of brilliant colors to others that are pastel and monotone in hue. Attention to detail, such as in *Metamorphosis I* and *II* display a technique that prompted this reporter to touch the work, as the fairies were painted in such a way that they seemed pasted on tissue paper, as if a collage. The vortex that is the center of the works draws the viewer in and holds their attention.

Another outstanding work, brilliant in color and yet exuding a sense of tranquility is “The Magic Flute,” consisting of a dramatically painted woman in a tropical environment that has many details requiring close study. Many of Gyzah’s works make the viewer pause and contemplate their nuances. What may seem simple at first often proves quite complex and provocative. Interwoven through the exhibition are also samples of her poetry, which along with her art, has been inspired by the “*Enuma Elish*: “When on High . . . “ the seven tables of the Mesopotamian myth of creation, which predates the Torah, or Old Testament.

Gyzah states that she chose the opening date of her exhibition purposely. Much has been made lately in the press and on the Internet of the date 06-06-06, claiming it reflects “the number of the beast,” but she refutes this. It is actually the Judgment card in the Major Arcana of the Tarot, with its quintessence the High Priestess. Gyzah expressed in her welcome to the gathering at her opening that what might actually be considered negative circumstance can actually be converted into something positive, spiritually. The world is experiencing troubled times, fear dominates many of our lives, but from this crisis she sees “a chance, an opportunity . . . to grow spiritually, evaluate life, rediscover its true essence, and discover your own Truth.” Her message in her poetry and paintings is to listen to “the truth your soul tells you, contrary to the one coming from outside.” The world makes many shallow, materialistic demands, reducing and demeaning one’s natural positive spirituality, but Gyzah hopes that the moments spent viewing her works will revive that positive energy. To judge from the faces of some looking at her paintings on opening night, it would appear she was successful in her goal.

“Mystique” can be seen Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 AM until 7:30 PM. On Tuesdays and Thursdays the works can be viewed from 10:00 AM until 4:30 PM. Gyzah will be in attendance to discuss her work and philosophy during those times.